

# Dumfries and Galloway Independent Advocacy Plan

(Adults and Children/Young people)

2024 - 2027



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## Joint Foreword

Ensuring people have access to independent advocacy services is a statutory requirement under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, updated 2015. The Mental Welfare Commission recommended in 2023 that all Health and Social Care Partnerships (made up of the local authority and NHS Board in this area) have a joint Independent Advocacy Plan by 31 March 2024.

In Dumfries and Galloway adult health and social care functions are delegated to the Integration Joint Board along with children's health functions. The local authority has responsibility for delivering Social Work functions for children and young people and regional health services are the remit of the NHS.

We as the Chairs (listed below) of the Integration Joint board, Education and Children's Services in Dumfries and Galloway Council, the NHS Board and the Dumfries and Galloway Alcohol and Drug Partnership, agreed to support the development of a joint Independent Advocacy Plan for Dumfries and Galloway.

It is important to all our organisations that people (particularly those who are the most vulnerable such as those experiencing mental ill health and children who are care experienced) have as much choice and control as possible over their own lives.

We are all committed to maintaining the provision of, and raising awareness of, independent advocacy in Dumfries and Galloway. We do so, believing it is a vital service for those that need it. Ensuring people have the information they need, to make decisions about their lives and having someone to speak up for them when they cannot do so for themselves is part of a rights-based approach we all support.



**Andy McFarlane, Chair Dumfries and Galloway Integration Joint Board**

**Jim Brown, Chair of Children's Services Strategic and Planning Partnership (CSSaPP)**

**Nick Morris, Chair of NHS D&G**

**Penny Halliday, Chair Dumfries and Galloway Alcohol and Drug Partnership**

## Dumfries and Galloway Independent Advocacy Plan (Adults, Children and Young People) 2024 - 2027 Plan on a Page

### What is independent advocacy?

Independent advocacy is a service that speaks up for people and helps them to have as much control as possible over their own lives.

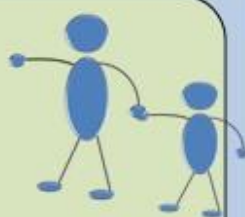
It makes sure that

- people's human rights are respected.
- everyone has the chance to have their views heard and that their knowledge and experience is taken into account
- people can share their concerns and have support to get them dealt with

### What is an independent advocate?

Independent advocates

- are people who provide this service
- are not part of any other service
- **cannot** make decisions on behalf of a person or group



### Providers of independent advocacy



Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service provides individual and collective advocacy to adults who meet the relevant criteria



advocacy for children and young people (within the identified priority groups) throughout Dumfries and Galloway. This includes care experienced children and young people.

### Needs analysis

There has been an increase in demand for independent advocacy services for both children/young people and adults in Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service over the last 10 years.

### The Joint Independent Advocacy Plan

This plan is for people in Dumfries and Galloway that need independent advocacy. It aims to ensure people have choices and have a voice in making decisions about things that affect them.

This includes

- adults with a learning disability, mental illness or other mental disorder
- adults living in Dumfries and Galloway who require the services of an advocate for individual or collective advocacy and meet the criteria
- children/young people who are **care experienced** and/or who are in placements out of this region
- children who are involved in the child protection process and/or children's hearing system
- children who have emotional well-being and mental health issues under the terms of the Mental Health Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- Carers for anyone in the above categories.

This includes people getting support from drug and alcohol services.

### Future Ambitions

- Partners will work together to deliver and support people to access independent advocacy
- The plan will be reviewed annually to reflect up to date legislation
- Increased knowledge, awareness of and access to independent advocacy will be promoted across Dumfries and Galloway
- Provision of independent advocacy for children and young people will remain part of the Children's Service Plan
- Independent advocacy providers will be supported to build sustainability through longer term funding
- Reduction of waiting lists



Words or terms that may be unfamiliar are in bold in **blue** and hyperlinked to the **[glossary](#)** where they are described or explained. Links to websites and sections within this plan are in **[purple](#)** and underlined.

## 1. Introduction

This is a joint Independent Advocacy Plan for Dumfries and Galloway for the period 2024 -2027. It relates to independent advocacy for adults, children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway.

This plan has been created following a period of engagement where the thoughts and experiences of stakeholders was gathered. The stakeholders involved included

- people with lived experience of advocacy services
- the families and Carers of people with lived experience
- people who deliver advocacy services
- people who may have need to access advocacy services in future

### 1.1 What is independent advocacy?

According to the **[Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance \(SIAA\)](#)**, independent advocacy is about speaking up for people and supporting individuals or groups. It makes sure people have a voice, and the support they need to overcome things that make their lives difficult. It ensures that people's human rights are recognised, respected, and met.

Independent advocacy helps people to access information and services that can support change. Independent advocacy can make sure situations do not get worse and can help people to build their confidence and knowledge, enabling some to advocate for themselves.

Independent advocacy is particularly important for individuals or groups that are not being heard, are vulnerable or are discriminated against. This can happen when a person does not have access to the right support to speak up or there are things that make it difficult for them to communicate. Independent advocacy supports people to engage and communicate with services that may not be meeting their needs.

### 1.2 Who provides independent advocacy?

The **[Independent Advocacy: Guide for Commissioners \(2013\)](#)** states that advocacy services must be provided by a service other than the local authority or Health Board in the area where the person is accessing care or treatment

Independent advocacy organisations provide, promote, and support independent advocacy. These organisations' sole role should be independent advocacy, unless its other tasks either complement, or do not conflict with, the provision of

independent advocacy. Independent advocacy organisations are services that are “structurally, financially, and psychologically separate from other organisations and interests” (Scottish Government, 2013)

**Independent advocates** work or volunteer for independent advocacy organisations. They help the person (**individual advocacy**) or group (**collective advocacy**) to get the information they need to make informed choices about their lives and support the person/group to communicate their choices to others.

An independent advocate may speak on behalf of people who are unable to do so for themselves, but they cannot make decisions on behalf of the person, or group, that they are supporting.

### **1.3 What is informal advocacy?**

Many organisations and people including family, friends and Carers can and do provide informal advocacy, guidance and support for the people they care for and/or support. This support is usually carried out in the context of a trusting personal or professional relationship that enables the informal advocate to understand the person’s needs and preferences. Informal advocacy is flexible and adaptable as it agreed by the people involved rather than a formal structure or process.

While there are similarities between informal and independent advocacy, they are quite different in respect of definition, level of involvement, and scope of involvement.

### **1.4 Why do we need an independent advocacy plan?**

Ensuring people have access to independent advocacy is a legal requirement in Scotland. The Dumfries and Galloway **Integration Joint Board (IJB)** Model of Care as described in the **Strategic Commissioning Plan** centres on a human rights based approach.

The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 (The 2003 Act) imposes a duty on local authorities and health boards to work together to ensure independent advocacy services are available in their area. The 2003 Act ensures that everyone with mental illness, learning disability, dementia, and related conditions has the right to have independent advocacy support.

The Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015 (The 2015 Act) includes a requirement for health boards and local authorities to report annually to the **Mental Welfare Commission** (MWC) on how they have provided access to independent advocacy services and evidence how they plan to do so in the future.

The MWC is responsible for safeguarding the rights and welfare of people in Scotland with a learning disability, mental illness or other mental disorder. It is accountable to the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Government's expectations for health and social care partnerships, health boards, and local authorities are shown as recommendations on page 7 of the MWC's ['The Right to Advocacy'](#) report published in April 2023.

### 1.5 Who is the joint Independent Advocacy Plan for?

The joint plan is for people in Dumfries and Galloway that need independent advocacy. It aims to ensure people have choices and have a voice in making decisions about things that affect them.

This includes

- adults with a learning disability, mental illness, or other mental disorder
- adults living in Dumfries and Galloway who require the services of an advocate for individual or collective advocacy and meet the criteria
- children/young people who are **care experienced** and/or who are in placements out of this region
- children who are involved in the child protection process and/or children's hearing system
- children who have emotional well-being and mental health issues under the terms of the Mental Health Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- Carers for adults and/or children/young people in the above categories


This includes people getting support from drug and alcohol services

## 2. How independent advocacy is currently delivered in Dumfries and Galloway

Commissioning and responsibility for ensuring independent advocacy is available to adults falls on the NHS Dumfries and Galloway and Dumfries and Galloway Council. The council is also responsible for commissioning independent advocacy for care experienced children and young people.

As at March 2024, there are two external providers of independent advocacy in Dumfries and Galloway

- Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service who receive core funding from the Health and Social Care Partnership through the IJB to provide Individual and Collective independent advocacy services for adults who meet the service criteria.
- Barnardo’s Hear 4 U Dumfries and Galloway project who receive core funding from the local authority to provide independent advocacy for children and young people.

<p><b>Adults</b></p>  <p>Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service is commissioned to provide individual and collective advocacy to adults who require support under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003. This includes <b>non-instructed advocacy</b>.</p> <p>The service also provides individual and collective advocacy to all adults living in Dumfries and Galloway who require the services of an advocate (and meet the criteria for independent advocacy support)</p>	<p><b>Children and young people</b></p> <p><b>Believe in children</b> Hear 4 U Dumfries and Galloway has a remit to provide advocacy for children and young people (within the identified priority groups) throughout the boundaries of Dumfries and Galloway Council.</p> <p><b>Barnardo’s</b> The project is also responsible for providing advocacy for children and young people who are care experienced and accommodated by Dumfries and Galloway Council in and out of authority placements.</p>
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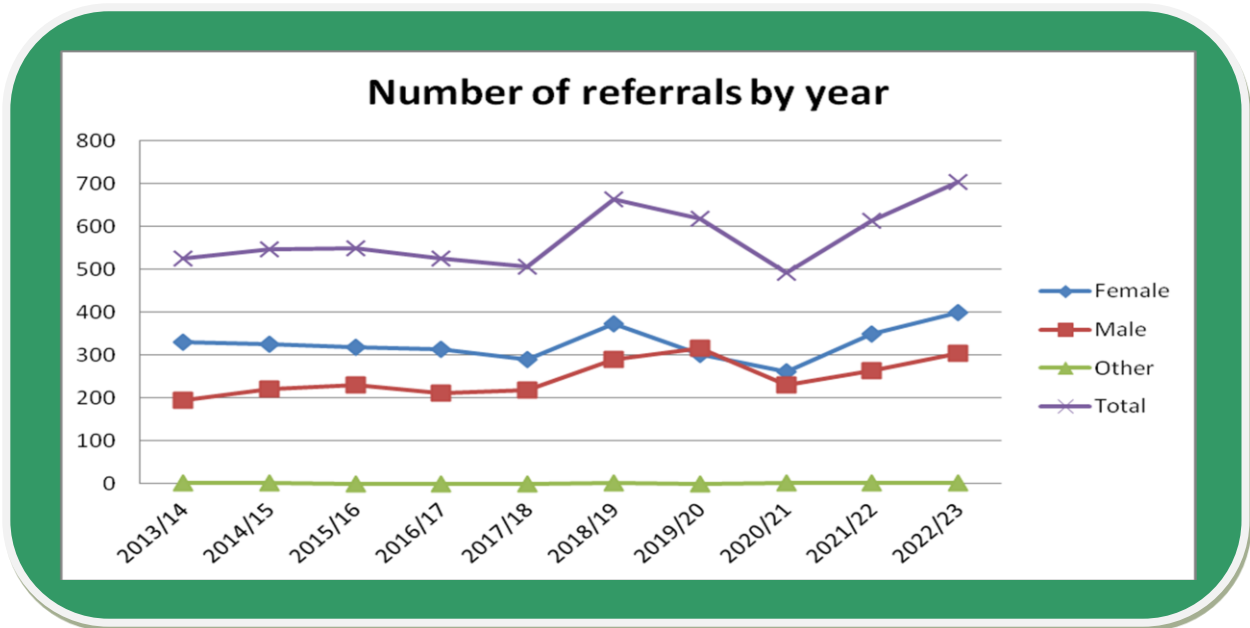
## 2.1 Independent advocacy for adults in Dumfries and Galloway

Independent advocacy is available to all adults who wish to have an independent advocate and are within the appropriate criteria. The service is not available for people with employment, legal, debt and benefits issues; for these particular issues people are signposted to other services that are available.

Over the past ten years Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service has supported **5,469** people across Dumfries and Galloway. There has been an increase in demand for independent advocacy services with the number of referrals to Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service (shown in **Figure 1**) rising from **526** in 2013/14 to **704** in 2022/23.

Although figure 1. shows the increase in referrals, it does not reflect or acknowledge the increased complexity of the support required by those people. Referrals are often significantly more complex including multiple issues which makes supporting a person time consuming and resource intensive.

**Figure 1 – Number of referrals to Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service**



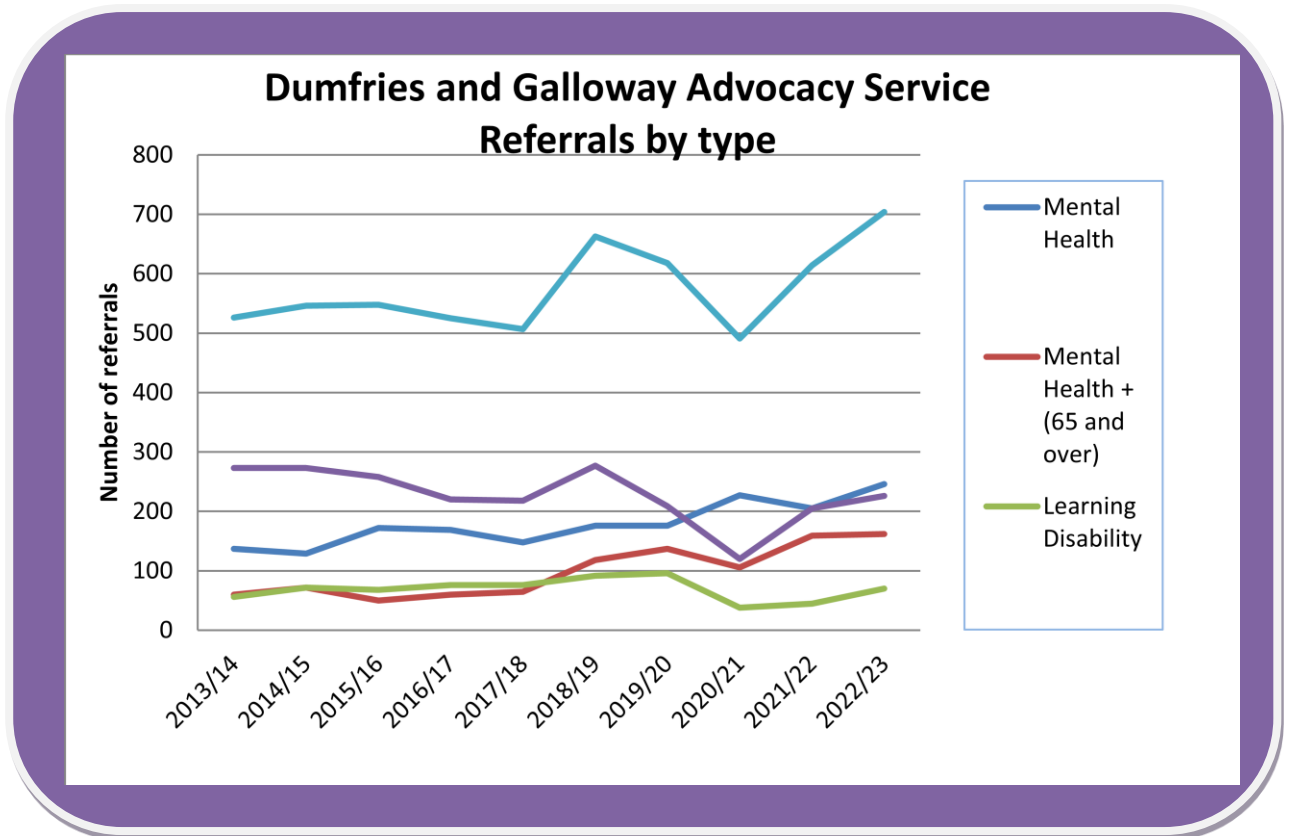
In addition to people who are allocated to independent advocates, people (those that do not meet criteria for Independent Advocacy) are often provided with information and signposting to more appropriate services.

Independent advocacy is provided across the region by Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service including at Midpark Hospital. Advocates support referred clients, as well as speaking to people on the wards who wish to ask questions. These contacts are logged as enquiries, and not recorded as referrals, despite the time it takes the advocate to source information for people.

A waiting list for access to independent advocacy has had to be put in place. The number of people waiting can vary regularly from between 0 and 25. Prioritisation is necessary for when demand exceeds capacity with priority being given to people who have needs under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.

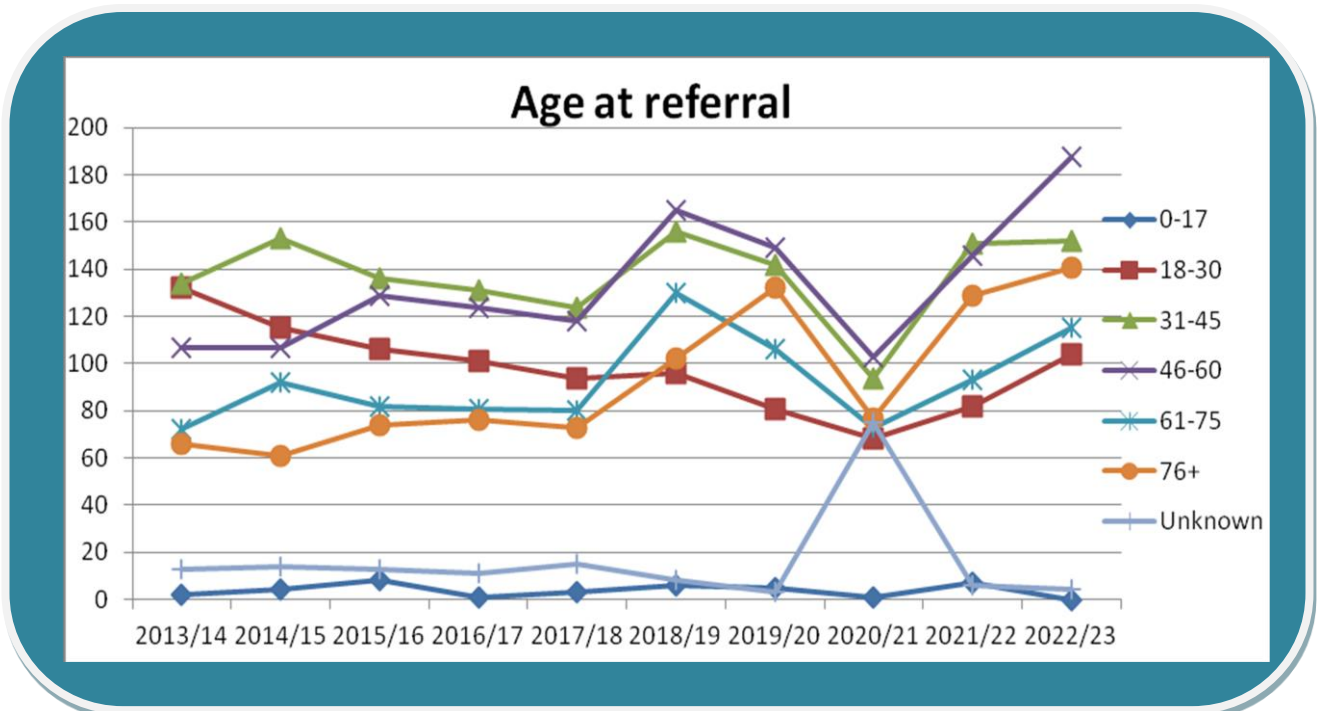
**Figure 2** shows the different types of referrals received by Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service over the last 10 year and indicates an upward trend in total referrals. The biggest increase has been in mental health referrals (particularly for people aged 65 and over).

**Figure 2 – Types of referrals to Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service**



**Figure 3** breaks down the age of people referred to the service and highlights that the age category that has increased the most is people over 76 years old. Referrals for this age group have increased by around 115% in 10 years.

**Figure 3 – Age at Referral to Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service**

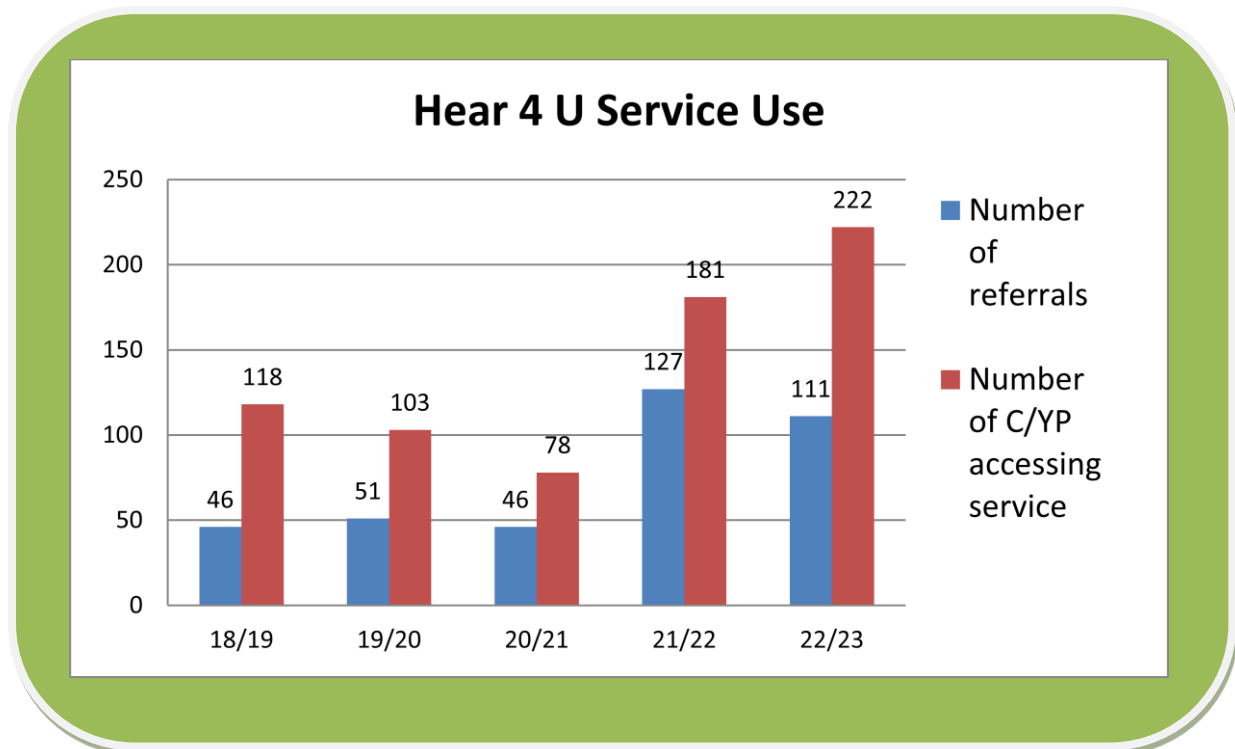


## 2.2 Advocacy for children and young people

Over the past 10 years Barnardo's Hear 4 U Advocacy Service has supported **702** children and young people across Dumfries and Galloway. The number of referrals to Hear 4 U each year has grown from **46** in 2018/2019 to **111** in 2022/2023 (briefly dropping back down to 46 during the Covid-19 pandemic).

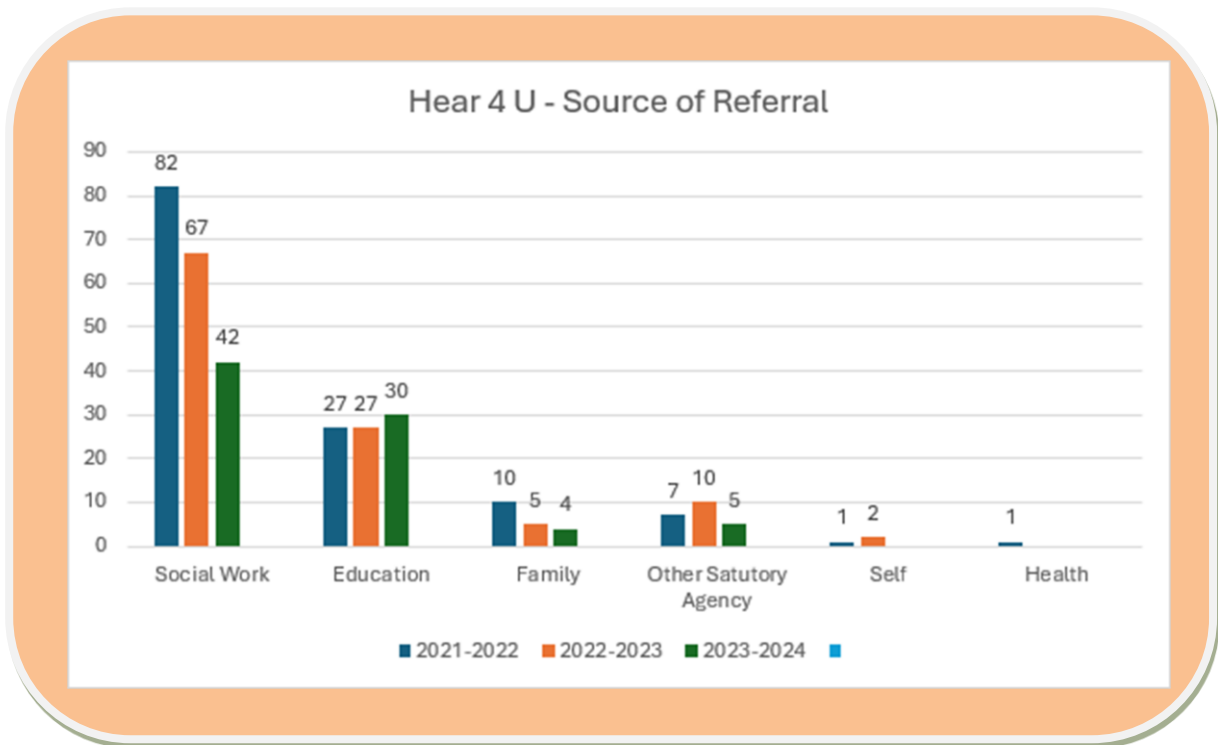
As can be seen in figure 4, the number of children and young people accessing the service is significantly (sometimes more than double) the number of referrals received.

**Figure 4 – Number of referrals to Hear 4 U Advocacy Service Dumfries and Galloway**



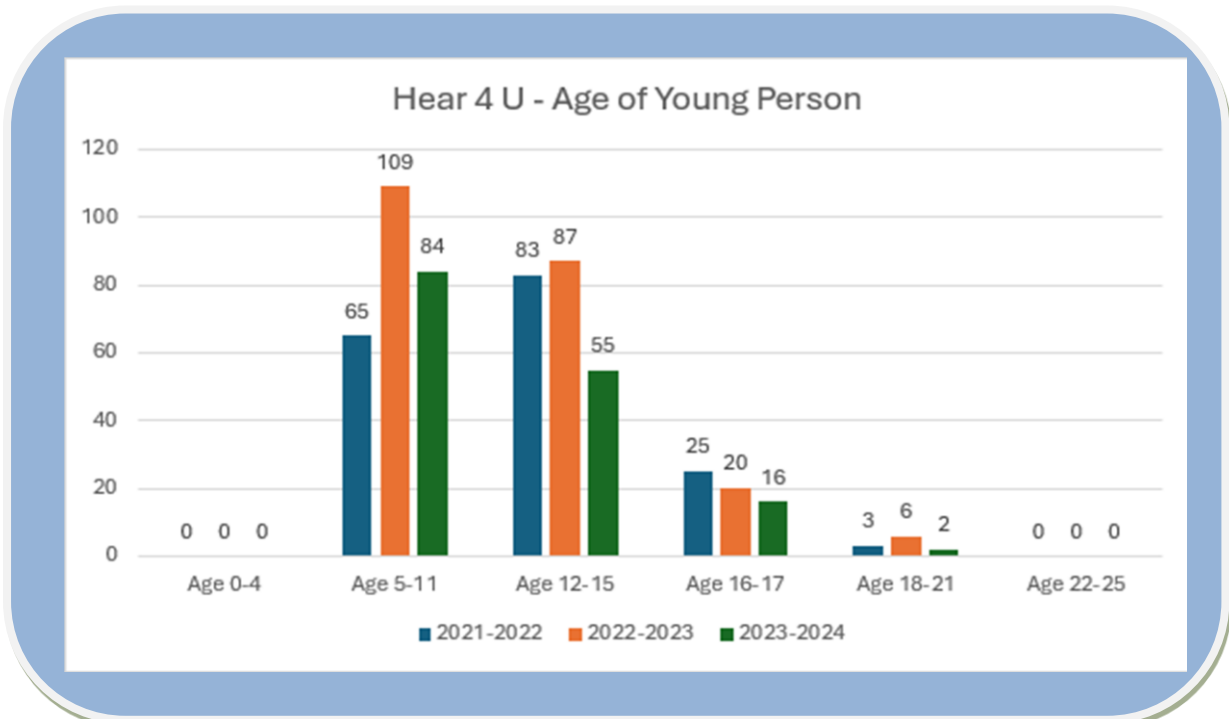
Using figures covering the period 2021 – 2024 show, the source of referrals to Hear 4 U are varied. The majority of referrals have come from Social Work as shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5 – Hear 4 U - Source of Referral**



As illustrated in Figure 6 the majority of children and young people who have accessed the Hear 4 U service since 2021 have been aged between 5 and 15. Those aged between 5 and 11 make up 46% of the total, with those aged 12 – 15 following close behind at 40%.

**Figure 6 – The age of young people accessing Hear 4 U**

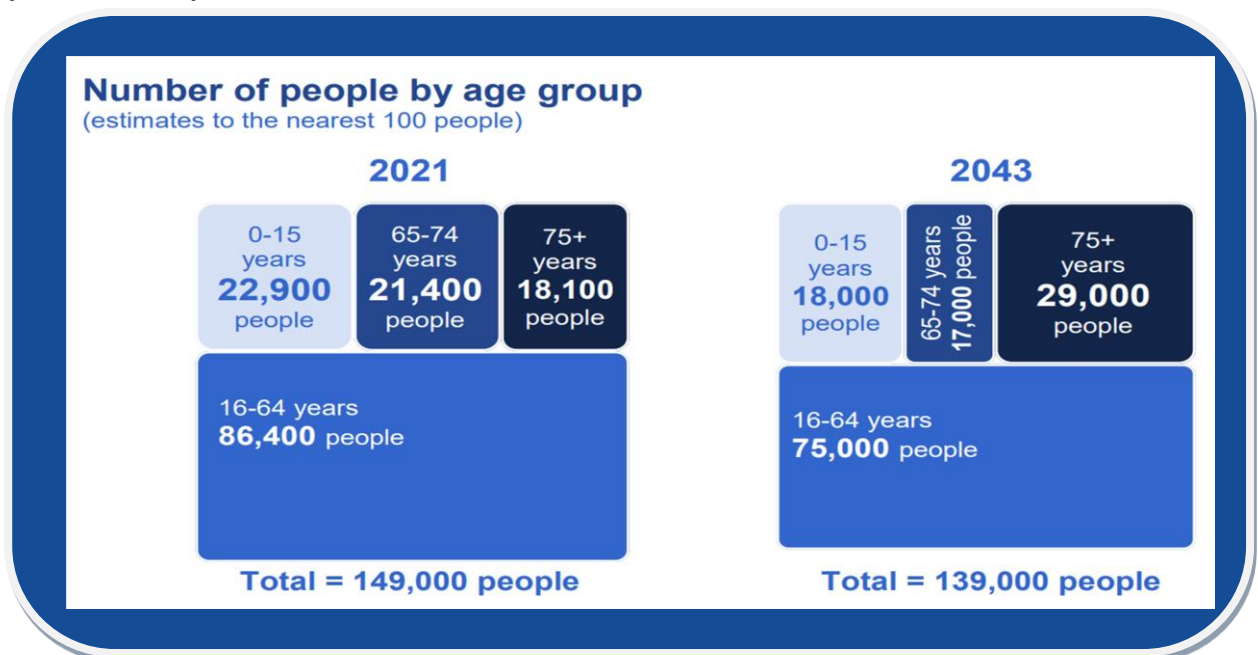


### 3. Future need for independent advocacy in Dumfries and Galloway

#### 3.1 Projected demographic change

**Figure 7** shows the projected change in population in Dumfries and Galloway up to 2043. This shows a likely decrease in the number of children and young people from **22,900** to **18,000**. It also indicates an increase in the number of people aged 65+ from **39,500** to **46,000**.

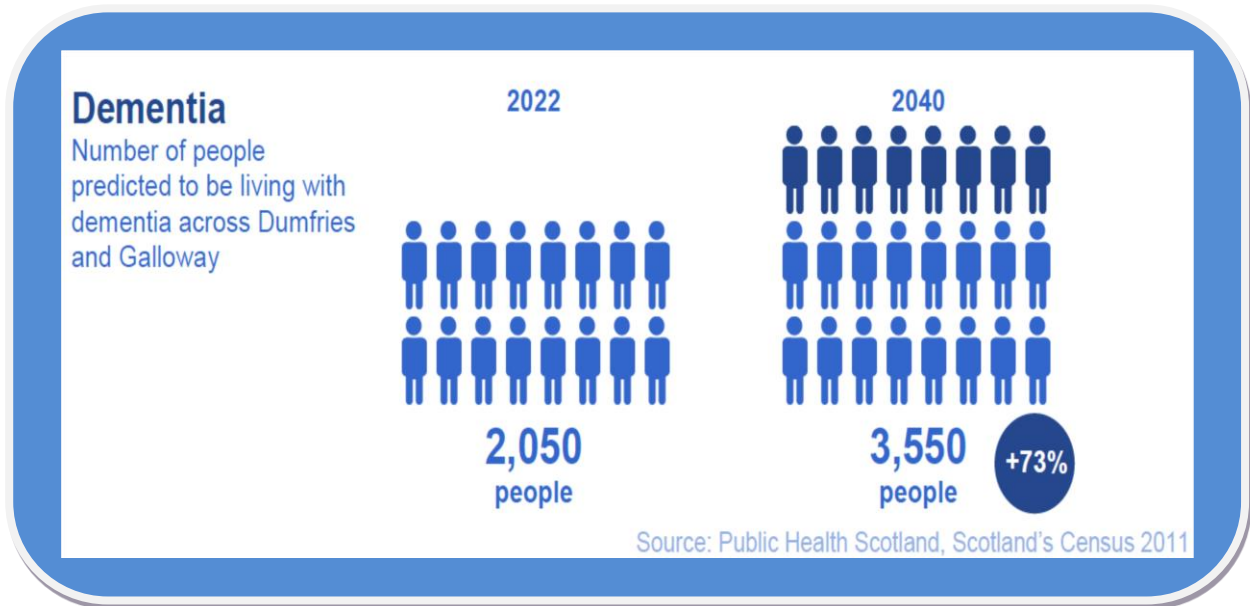
**Figure 7 – Projected number of people living in Dumfries and Galloway by age (nearest 100).**



Increases in the older adult population in Dumfries and Galloway and associated rise in the number of people with dementia means that there is likely to be more people who need the support provided by independent advocates. Increased complexity in the lives of people with multiple long term conditions and the number of people living alone can also lead to increased demand for services including independent advocacy.

It is projected that approximately 5.3% of people in Scotland over the age of 65 will be living with dementia by 2040 according to the London School of Economics and Political Science (2019). If this figure was applied to the population in Dumfries and Galloway this would indicate that around 3,550 people will have dementia by that time, see **Figure 8**.

**Figure 8 - Estimated prevalence of dementia in adults by 2040**



Under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, people with dementia are entitled to access independent advocacy or can be referred on a non-instructed basis to protect their human rights. Given the projected demographic change, there is likely to be an increase in demand from this group for independent advocacy services.

The increase in numbers of people with dementia and other long term and life limiting conditions and a lack of guardianship for many, complicates this and puts more pressure on advocacy services. This is also likely to impact on the pressure on Carers and Young Carers. This may result in a further increase in referrals to independent advocacy for all ages.

## 4. What people are telling us about independent advocacy

### 4.1 The voice of lived experience

This Plan has been informed by people who

- have experience of accessing independent advocacy
- have the potential to need independent advocacy services in the future
- deliver or refer into those services.

Engagement activities enabled us to find out what is working, what is not, and to identify areas for improvement.

The plan is specific to formal independent advocacy not informal advocacy which can be provided by Carers, Young Carers and other, mainly third sector organisations, in Dumfries and Galloway.

## 4.2 What have we achieved so far?

The previous Dumfries and Galloway Strategic Advocacy Plan (Adults) 2018 – 2021 set out to achieve the following outcomes.

Increase people's choice and control by supporting them to

- influence the decision-making processes
- challenge decisions
- achieve the outcome they were seeking
- feel listened to by the professionals/service providers
- to make their own decisions
- to appeal, complain or raise concerns
- access information to support decision making
- increase independence
- increase personal dignity and respect
- reduce dependency on services
- increase confidence

People shared their experience of independent advocacy during 12 weeks of engagement across Dumfries and Galloway. The feedback from stakeholders has told us where we have achieved these outcomes and where people feel we need to improve things. The themes that emerged from what people told us has supported us to identify future outcomes. These outcomes are included in section 5.2 of this Plan.



## 5. Planning for the future

The local plan links to the Mental Welfare Commission’s recommendations below. The outcomes are based on themes that emerged during the engagement process.

### 5.1 Response to Mental Welfare Commission’s recommendations

MWC Recommendations	Current position	Future ambition
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> All health and social care partnerships (HSCPs), health boards and local authorities should work collaboratively to ensure that a strategic advocacy plan has been developed and implemented for a three year period based on information gathered from a needs assessment, scoping exercises and consultations for the provision of independent advocacy services in their area by 31 March 2024.</p>	<p>The joint Independent Advocacy Plan has been developed collaboratively with stakeholders including colleagues from the Health and Social Care Partnership and Drug and Alcohol Partnership.</p> <p>People’s views are reflected in <b>Section 4</b> and have been used to ensure the plan meets peoples’ identified needs and wants.</p> <p>The means that plan has been influenced by the voice of lived experience through engagement with people delivering and accessing advocacy.</p> <p>This plan published on 31 March 2024 replaces the previous Dumfries and Galloway Strategic Advocacy Plan for Adults 2018 – 2021.</p>	<p>The final plan is published following formal agreement by the partners involved.</p> <p>All parties are working collaboratively to deliver people’s right to access to independent advocacy. To support people, achieve their outcomes and have their voices heard.</p> <p>Progress of delivery is monitored annually through existing performance frameworks. The plan is reviewed collaboratively every 3 years.</p>

MWC Recommendations	Current position	Future ambition
<p><b>Recommendation 2: Equality Impact Assessments</b> (EQIA) must be undertaken when developing and finalising strategic advocacy plans and signed off by senior management from all key partners (health and social care partnerships, health boards and local authorities).</p>	<p>The Dumfries and Galloway EQIA is a shared document and is used by the partners involved.</p> <p>An EQIA has been completed for developing this plan with appropriate stakeholders</p> <p><a href="#">Link to EQIA to be added on publication</a></p>	<p>EQIA will be published on the Council and NHS websites once the plan has been formally approved by the partners involved.</p> <p>The EQIA documentation is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect up to date duties. For example, considering the impact on unpaid Carers was recently added. It is anticipated that future duties such as the UN convention on the Rights of the Child will be added.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> All HSCPs, health boards and local authorities should ensure that advocates and advocacy organisations commissioned to provide advocacy services in their area comply with the principles and standards set out in <a href="#">Appendix 1 of the Scottish Government Guidance: Independent advocacy - a guide for commissioners (2013)</a>.</p>	<p>Contract monitoring takes place to ensure compliance with the contract and agreed principles and standards are being met.</p> <p>Submissions to MWC are completed by contract monitoring teams and/or providers.</p> <p>Organisations commissioned to provide advocacy complete all monitoring forms and feedback as agreed in the terms of their contract.</p>	<p>Responding and reacting to the feedback gathered during monitoring to change and improve practice and performance.</p> <p>Include lived experiences by asking Carers and people who access and deliver independent advocacy to share their lived experiences.</p> <p>Ensure that quality assurance is provided through feedback to appropriate governance groups</p>

MWC Recommendations	Current position	Future ambition
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> All HSCPs, health boards and local authorities should promote advocacy services among health, social care and social work staff through training/awareness sessions and ensure information is available through a wide range of methods to members of the public.</p>	<p>Resources are being developed to ensure people across Dumfries and Galloway including health and social care staff, people accessing services, Carers, third sector organisations and the wider community are more aware of independent advocacy and how to access it.</p>	<p>Organisations working across health and social care will promote independent advocacy by increasing visibility, increasing referrals (where appropriate) and ensure access to information.</p> <p>Awareness of independent advocacy will be increased through a wide range of methods including partner websites, staff training and shared resources.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> All children’s integrated service plans should include reference to the provision of independent advocacy services by 31 March 2024.</p>	<p>The plan includes detail around how advocacy services for children are provided across Dumfries and Galloway and is linked to the local <a href="#"><u>Children’s Service Plan for Dumfries and Galloway</u></a></p>	<p>Provision of independent advocacy will continue to be part of the Children’s Service Plan for Dumfries and Galloway going forward</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> All HSCPs, health boards and local authorities to consider the term of funding in response to the feedback from the advocacy organisations about how this can make it challenging regarding long term planning and sustainability of independent advocacy organisations.</p>	<p>Adult advocacy services receive core funding from the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). This is done on a 3-year contract. This is to support long term planning and sustainability. Additional funding must be found from external sources to meet current needs.</p>	<p>The HSCP and ADP commission jointly using a collaborative and ethical commissioning approach.</p> <p>3-year contracts with Third Sector organisations are the norm within Dumfries and Galloway</p>

	<p>Children’s provision is currently under review</p> <p>Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) funded advocacy has been commissioned on an annual basis but is currently under review.</p>	<p>All eligible clients report that they have been supported in a timely fashion that met their needs.</p> <p>Waiting lists are reduced</p>
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## 5.2 Outcomes that have been identified during the engagement process

The current position shows where we are meeting the requirements. The following actions build on and expand on those recommendations.

Actions out with the MWC recommendations identified while developing the plan	How we aim to achieve these
Adult Carers are supported to access independent advocacy	Funding through Carers Act Funding will facilitate this from 2024 – 2026 and will be reviewed. This is not part of the 3-year statutory commissioning cycle.
Meeting people’s needs in respect of access to independent	Partners will collectively agree to work together to plan, commission and deliver independent advocacy for those that meet the relevant criteria in Dumfries and Galloway
Encourage and support self-advocacy	Putting in place the support people need to build their confidence, knowledge, and resilience to be able to self-advocate where possible Raise awareness of support organisations

Other actions identified while developing the plan	How we aim to achieve these
Enabling access to advocacy	<p>Work collaboratively to identify how people from Dumfries and Galloway can access advocacy Advocacy providers ensure that their advocacy service is accessible</p> <p>Ensure there are flexible options available to enable people to access advocacy (in person, online, and self-referral)</p> <p>When people lack capacity to instruct their advocate, advocacy providers ensure that the advocacy remains person led and involves people with an interest in the person's welfare.</p> <p>Advocacy providers promote equality throughout their services for everyone including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.</p>
Ensure provision of effective advocacy	<p>Ensure that advocacy services are accessible</p> <p>Strive for consistency of support</p> <p>Maintain inpatient presence at Midpark should</p> <p>Ensure that advocacy services are person centred</p> <p>Deliver effective advocacy to ensure safeguarding</p>
Share information about independent advocacy and signpost to services	<p>Everyone working in health and social care and other associated organisations and groups should have access to information and be able to identify the need for independent advocacy and make referrals where appropriate</p>

Other actions identified while developing the plan	How we aim to achieve these
Enabling and supporting effective advocacy	<p>Health and social care providers support independent advocacy, by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the need for independent advocacy and make referrals where appropriate</li> <li>• respecting the advocate's independence</li> <li>• sharing information appropriately with advocates</li> <li>• giving the person privacy to talk to their advocate</li> <li>• supporting people to understand advocacy and access advocacy</li> <li>• supporting any communication needs, such as arranging for an interpreter</li> </ul> <p>Local authorities and health and social care providers will include the numbers of referrals they make to advocacy services as a part of their corporate performance information.</p> <p>Systems for tracking and monitoring concerns will be in place</p>
Training and skills for services who are working with adults, children and young people who may require advocacy	Providers and commissioners ensure that information about independent advocacy is included in training for all health and social care practitioners and other services working with adults, children, and young people

## 6. Monitoring

This plan will be reviewed annually and progress against the measures will be monitored through agreed processes with partner organisations.

Data will be collected from Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Services and Barnardo's Hear 4 U Service Dumfries and Galloway as part of contract monitoring in line with the Dumfries and Galloway Contract Monitoring Framework.

Monitoring feedback will be reported to the relevant Integration Joint Board Committee through the Partnership Delivery Plan pathway.

Feedback to the MWC will be carried out through the appropriate reporting process as agreed by partners.

Feedback from MWC will determine future action by the partners involved on yearly basis.

## Glossary

**Care experienced** means children or young people who are cared for in residential, foster or kinship or supported accommodation, rather than in their own home. This includes when that care provided by the Council outwith Dumfries and Galloway.

**Equality impact assessment (EQIA)** is part of a process for identifying if the work we are doing is likely to impact on people, particularly people with protected characteristics.

Completing an EQIA is part of the Fairer Scotland Duty to “reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when we make strategic decisions”. Doing this early in the planning of projects enables us to put mitigating actions in place if potential negative impacts are identified.

**Individual Advocacy** includes professional or issue based advocacy. It can be provided by both paid and unpaid advocates. An advocate supports an individual to represent their own interests or represents the views of an individual if the person is unable to do this for themselves. They provide support on specific issues and provide information but not advice. This support can be short or long term.

**Integrated Joint Board (IJB)** is made up of people from the NHS, Dumfries and Galloway Council as well as Third Sector and Independent Sector organisations.

The IJB are responsible for planning and delivering a lot of the health and social care that people across Dumfries and Galloway access.

**Group or Collective Advocacy** enables a peer group of people, as well as a wider community with shared interests, to represent their views, preferences and experiences. Being part of a collective advocacy group can help to reduce an individual’s sense of isolation when raising a difficult issue. Groups can benefit from the support of resources and skilled help from an advocacy organisation.

**Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland** are commissioned by the Scottish Government to monitor the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and the welfare parts of the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.

The MWC “**protect and promote the human rights of people with mental illness, learning disabilities, dementia and related conditions**”.

**Non-instructed advocacy** is when a person needing independent advocacy cannot tell the advocate what they want because they have complex communication needs, a long term illness or disability that prevents them from forming or clearly stating their wishes/desires.

Non-instructed advocacy can be used with people who have dementia or profound and/or severe learning difficulties. The advocate will take time to get to know the person and relatives/friends and look for alternative methods of communication that enable the person to express their views and wishes, ensuring their rights are upheld. In this situation the advocate can challenge service providers to promote a person centred independent approach.

**Protected characteristics** include age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation and gender reassignment according to the Equality Act 2010.

## **Useful links and references**

[Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)

[Adults with Incapacity \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#)

[Children's Service Plan for Dumfries and Galloway 2023](#)

[Dumfries and Galloway IJB Strategic Commissioning Plan 2022 - 2025](#)

[Independent Advocacy: Guide for Commissioners \(2013\)](#)

[Mental Health \(Care and Treatment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#)

[Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance \(SIAA\)](#)

[The Right to Advocacy report \(2023\)](#)